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TRACK
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ROAD





In the pits / The Higgins sunglasses

Photos: Jeff Kardas

Photo: Dimitri Coste

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HONDA



CAPTAIN COME BACK

On track / The Accuri In&Out

*GEICO Honda's Justin Bogle races with the new
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PLAY

Burn out...

Honda's Evgeny Bobryshev was very lucky to escape injury after a frightening collision at the MXGP of Trentino last weekend. The tyre marks from Jeremy Van Horebeek's factory Yamaha give you an indication of what happened. Watch the amazing video clip to see how the HRC ace only just avoided another broken bone

Photo by Ray Archer



MX





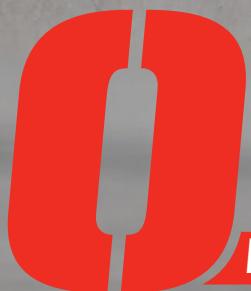


PLAY

A touch premature...

Jorge Lorenzo's 'aw, f**k it' handful of throttle partly explains this massive lead off the line at COTA in Austin for round two of the MotoGP. The startling jumpstart was quite incredible from an athlete and multi champion of Lorenzo's experience. So these guys are not aliens after all...

Photo by yamahamotogp.com





AMA-MX

It could be me, one day...

There is probably no other motorsport that captures the imagination of kids and young people as much as dirt-bike racing; certainly no other discipline that allows them to get as close in terms of participation and appreciation. Here in Seattle Simon Cudby catches a keen factory Kawasaki admirer

Photo by Simon Cudby



MONSTER
ENERGY



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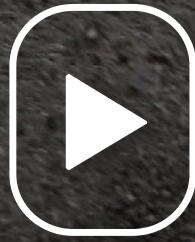
MX

GRAND PRIX OF TRENTO

ARCO DI TRENTO (ITA) · APRIL 13th · Rnd 4 of 18

MXGP winner: Clement Desalle, Suzuki

MX2 winner: Jeffrey Herlings, KTM



PLAY

A blurry background photograph of a motocross race. On the left side, the front wheel and part of the frame of a yellow motorcycle are visible. In the center, several motocross riders are blurred, suggesting motion. The background is a mix of green and blue, likely representing trees and sky.

MXGP TRENTINO

ROUGH AND SMOOTH

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer

A second and a first for Clement Desalle gave the Belgian a first GP win since Matterley Basin last year and his fourth from the last eight GP events. Desalle was running a 2015 engine on his works RM-Z450 as well as a lighter '15 frame

Tension in the FIM Motocross World Championship hit a sharp upward curve at Trentino in Italy. There was more of everything: people, attention, riders (with WMX and European EMX125 classes in support), paddock set-up, press, responsibilities and bumps. The only aspects that were in short supply included room in the impossibly small and compact Arco di Trento circuit to cope with such an infrastructure and movement of people, as well as grip across the short hard-pack layout.

It would have been easier to find a badly cooked pizza in the immensely beautiful region near Lake Garda than a Grand Prix rider content with the track on Saturday. Yes, it was typically Italian and also already familiar after only minor changes had been made to the trajectory from 2013. It was scruffy and tight. A scratchers track. It soon rippled into all sorts of hard and protruding lumps. The MXGP riders barely seemed to be on the gas with the 450s by Sunday afternoon, such was the level of respect it demanded.

The first moto of the MXGP class delivered a professional race that Arco ominously promised to replicate throughout Sunday. The start was beyond crucial. Or that's what many thought.

The reasons that many racers disliked the track turned out to be some of the factors that created riveting entertainment and riders like Arnaud Tonus not only debunked the 'bad start, bad result' myth by coming through from almost last to second place in the opening MX2 moto but was among the first to show that there were indeed some line choices available. The Brazilian GP winner totally deserved his second place and more importantly his continued stewardship of the red plate as the category's points pace-setter.

The afternoon was enlivened further by some memorable incidents: Steven Frossard's brutal crash (from which he was knocked unconscious but was OK after checks), and Evgeny Bobryshev's back bounce, in other words the Russian's miserable luck in falling and being used as Super Mario Bros obstacle by Jeremy Van Horebeek. Not forgetting Tony Cairoli's misfortune with a first moto tangle out of the gate and then two crashes and desperation to regain ground in the last race that saw him miss the podium for only the second time in a year.



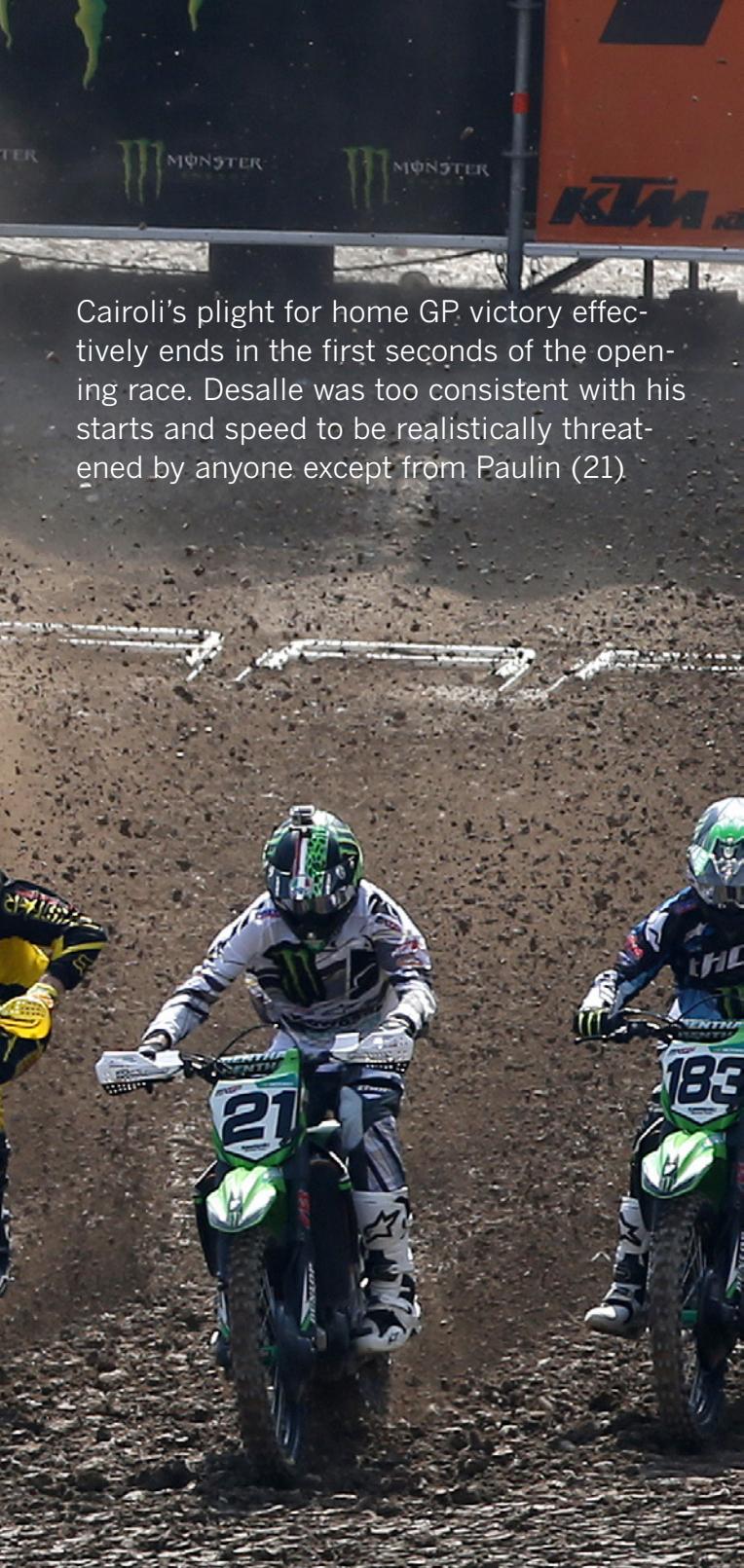
MXGP TRENTINO





PLAY





Cairolì's plight for home GP victory effectively ends in the first seconds of the opening race. Desalle was too consistent with his starts and speed to be realistically threatened by anyone except from Paulin (21).



There were also some surprising performances. The emerging Swiss element of MX2 included a bright Valentin Guillod and Jeremy Seewer, both taking personal best GP finishes. Seventeen year old Tim Gajser was a standout again on the factory Honda and Glenn Coldenhoff gave Suzuki three podiums in row for the first time since 2011.

Sympathy, wholeheartedly, for Gautier Paulin who perhaps should have walked this MXGP fixture for his second triumph of the season. He cantered to a first moto success ahead of Desalle and was on the verge of splitting free of the Suzuki in the second until his Kawasaki proved less resistant to the Arco terrain than the Frenchman's will and talent. Paulin was screaming into his hands in the pitlane with the frustration of 25 valuable points left simmering in the smoke of his deceased 450cc engine. '21's ill luck however does not withdraw anything from Desalle's 2-1 scorecard that was the product of bravery and competence. The Belgian is fond of terrain like Arco that is similar in traction and treatment to that of Loket in the Czech Republic where he has been a serial winner.

In MXGP Jeffrey Herlings again put his name in the significant position in the record books but was less convincing than usual and certainly less than in the powerhouse training video seen on the internet in the build-up to the GP. Tonus was on the box for the second time, Coldenhoff for the third. Jordi Tixier was competing with a painful wrist and hand while Max Anstie juggled 2013 and 2014 YZ250F equipment through the weekend and also had some tough personal news on the morning of the race that could hardly have helped his predisposition for competition.

Allegedly Arco is set for expansion for 2014, which means Italy will remain a two-stop country for the MXGP calendar (Maggiora something of a golden egg). The attendance was decent, even if the experience of arriving and being at Arco probably wasn't the best example of a top flite Grand Prix event. A contrast lies in place this weekend for round five. Sevlievo is wide, fast and unrelenting and the 450s should sing around the Bulgarian hillside. Can Cairolì roar back and reclaim lost ground in his championship advantage? Previous history would dictate 'no' as the Sicilian has not won at the upcoming venue since his MX2 days.



TER
Y



MONSTER
ENERGY





A third win from four for Herlings but still no red plate with Arnaud Tonus maintaining his good form. The Dutchman is now in the rare situation where he *needs* victories to be able to control the MX2 series once again







A haze of dust and foggy light from the mountain range hung over Arco on Sunday but the Suzukis had no problem in standing out. Glenn Coldenhoff rode to his second moto victory in as many races. The works RM-Z250 is now at the competitive level of the Roczen days back at the beginning of the decade and the development with the Geboers MXGP works team has to take credit for that. Coldenhoff as well of course...



Gautier Paulin (left) is consoled in the immediate aftermath of his second moto DNF while leading. Bobryshev (below left) went to hospital to have his back examined but was given the all-clear by Tuesday morning. Kiara Fontanesi (8) wins her home GP in WMX while Davy Pootjes (below) proves that the Dutch talent factory is only just getting started. At the moment it is Switzerland that is producing the fastest racers in MX2; Valentin Guillod leads the way on the Standing Construct KTM (main pic). Lastly, Max Anstie continues to hover between 2013 and 2014 Yamaha machinery with the brand new YZ250F just quite not ready to lead Grands Prix



A second top three moto finish for Honda's Tim Gajser. The teenage Slovenian is really catching attention in MX2 after a learning season in 2013. An iffy start in the second moto at Arco ruled out a possible first overall podium appearance



MXGP TRENTO





JP Acevedo

Van Horebeek (left) made too many mistakes to consider his first MXGP win but his third podium from four indicates the high level at which he is currently operating. Jeremy Seewer (below left) set personal career-bests in MX2 and was a surprise figure in the battle for podium places in the first moto. Arco was just his fourth GP in a rookie full-time season. Tyla Rattray (this page) finally finished his first GP since 2008 and first ever in the premier class. The South African was 22nd overall and clearly lacking bike and race time after recovering from a broken finger

MXGP TRENTO





A hectic weekend for Tony Cairoli when MXGP comes to Italy is nothing new but the Sicilian will be concerned at gifting points to Desalle and especially with round five taking place at a circuit where his Belgian rival and Gauthier Paulin have both owned the last four Grands Prix...







Two contrasting motos for Shaun Simpson but his sixth place in the second race was a season-best so far



CLASSIFICATION & WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

MXGP OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Clement Desalle, BEL	Suzuki
2	Jeremy Van Horebeek, BEL	Yamaha
3	Kevin Strijbos, BEL	Suzuki
4	Max Nagl, GER	Honda
5	Tony Cairoli, ITA	KTM

MX2 OVERALL RESULT

Riders

1	Jeffrey Herlings, NED	KTM
2	Arnaud Tonus, SUI	Kawasaki
3	Glenn Coldenhoff, NED	Suzuki
4	Valentin Guillod, SUI	KTM
5	Romain Febvre, FRA	Husqvarna

MXGP WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 4 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Tony Cairoli	175
2 Clement Desalle	158
3 Jeremy Van Horebeek	154
4 Max Nagl	144
5 Gautier Paulin	137

MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (AFTER 4 OF 18 ROUNDS)

Riders	Points
1 Arnaud Tonus	154
2 Glenn Coldenhoff	148
3 Jeffrey Herlings	144
4 Romain Febvre	126
5 Dylan Ferrandis	118



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NOTHING BUT A NUMBER...

By Adam Wheeler

It is something that has been stewing in the background for over a year but as 2015 contract offers are already circulating the MXGP paddock the pressing issue of the 23 age limit regulation for the MX2 class is ready to start bubbling with more than half of the current top ten of the category set for ejection in a matter of months.

Two things are currently 100% certain. The first is that the FIM and Youthstream are publicly supportive of retaining the polemic regulation. The second is the knowledge that the teams and factories will soon be submitting a request for a review of the ruling (around time of the GP at Maggiora in June).

In truth the principal victims of the MX2 limitations are diminutive racers like Jose Butron who will have to adapt – like it or not – in order to be able to continue a career at a high level in Europe. There is something about this ‘singular highway’ that is not so likeable or in-keeping with the sport’s fading roots of accessibility. It also pushes riders into an awkward corner. Youthstream have already voiced their concerns about the appropriateness of 450cc four-strokes as the principal motorcycles of the premier MXGP class (too heavy, too fast, too powerful) but under the current guidelines athletes of 23+ will have to baulk-up and man-up to handle this bikes whether they like them or not.

Is the rule such an evil though? As we’ve written before it is essentially designed to push the best riders into MXGP – where Youthstream Presi-

dent Giuseppe Luongo claims his goal is quality rather than quantity - and makes the European Championship puzzle click into place for formation of a visible career ladder through regional 85s, into 125s, up to 250s (the last two series’ taking place as part of Grand Prix support programmes) and then MX2 if the grade is made.

“The pressing issue of the 23 age limit for the MX2 class is ready to start bubbling...”

When Jeffrey Herlings sat out the Grand Prix of Brazil there was just one rider who boasted GP winning experience, Glenn Coldenhoff, and even then the Dutchman used Beto Carrero to see a chequered flag for the first time in his career (he won the overall in Britain with 3-4 results last summer). People might claim that there is a dearth of outstanding talent in MX2 but there is certainly not a lack of promise – and this is what the powers-that-be want MX2 to become: a stepping stone. It would be a mistake to assume that there is nothing coming through from the European level (at which Youthstream want to push graduates from the MX Academy in other parts of the world) and that there isn’t a generation of riders ready to try and shine like the Musquin-Roczen-Herlings wave. It is worth remembering that MX2 has been through a golden patch with Cairoli, Pourcel, Searle (twice), and the three aforementioned stars all contributing to a trend of young and standout competitors.



It can easily happen again and most likely will do.

Looking around and the 23 year rule also plays into the hands of those shrewd visionaries in Austria. While a rider like Jake Nicholls might still fancy the pull of a 450 in his first year in MXGP somebody else like Pascal Rauchenecker has taken a year to master the 350SX-F in the German national series in order to make a play for a GP return in 2015. The bike that has won the last four MXGP/MX1 titles is a handy intermediary tool for those considering the leap from a 250. Even Butron – at 5ft 6" - is hedging his bets and has a KTM/Husky extension on his contract for 2015 that is almost certainly going to push him in the way of a 350, either in white or orange. KTM Sport Director Pit Beirer admitted that he supports the age limit regulation at the weekend. Not because his firm manufactures a mechanical alternative to the 450, but because it serves a purpose in the development of racing talent to then reach MXGP.

When Herlings goes 'up' in 2015 then MX2 will be a battle royal between the likes of Tixier, Anstie, Ferrandis, Gajser, Tonkov, Covington and co. It will be like a refresh. For the present gaggle of riders in MXGP – as maybe it should be at the 'top' – the pressure to perform and earn that contract will be acute.

In my view the main cause for concern is not necessarily the system but the lack of teams and available rides in MXGP that is causing the bottleneck and squeezing a rider's chance to

develop in Grand Prix. Draw a parallel to football players or managers. It seems MXGP is now under more pressure for instant results and with an eighteen round, global series forcing budgets, riders will only be given so much of a chance; woe betide those with any significant injuries.

"It is the lack of teams and available rides in MXGP that is causing the bottleneck..."

The 23 rule might actually have helped a rider like Arnaud Tonus retain a lofty position in the class in terms of his worth through many sticky times in physio, while those like Matiss Karro has had an extra season without pressure in MXGP to develop his speed and stay off the ground. With an influx of quality for 2015 the young Estonian needs to be looking over his shoulder.

The championship is morphing into a new, modern form. More TV coverage, a better and more presentable face and more opportunities for people to connect with MXGP. This transition still needs to make participation for race teams an easier process and more contemplative prospect. The real fear, or perhaps shame, is that birthdays might come around faster than the time it takes for backing, sponsors and support to be found to flesh out the paddock and add some water to the flower.





5

REASONS WHY JVH IS KNOCKING THEM OUT OF THE PARK IN MXGP

By Adam Wheeler, Photos by Ray Archer

In 2013 Jeremy Van Horebeek was like he has been for most of his career: chipper, consistent, fast without being spectacular. It was an assured debut year in the premier class of the FIM Motocross World Championship after a slow (injury-burdened) start and following some bright years in MX2. It removed some of his doubters; yours truly included. It really did look like the friendly Belgian would be better suited to life on a 450.

Bulkier, more confident and relishing a factory Yamaha environment constructed solely for him it would appear that JVH is the man for 2014.

He has been ever-present among the leaders in every moto this season. He has three podiums from four and was within one second of a first moto victory last Sunday in Trentino. At 24 a watershed career moment is on the way. We chatted to the racer and 2013 Motocross of Nations winner to gain a little insight into how this transformation from nice-guy/decent-racer to focused-athlete/potential-world champ took place...

JEREMY VAN HOREBECK



BECOMING THE MAN...

Never doubt the powers of experience and wisdom. And also a wise guiding hand when it comes to professional preparation. Van Horebeek has gotten serious in the last two years and its clearly evident.

"It has been a big change. In the beginning [of your career] you are training but also thinking 'yeah, I'm a GP rider; let's do this'. It is about way-more than that. It is all in the details. I've learned through experience and from the people behind me how to manage those details and it has made a young boy into a man. Sometimes it is difficult because you have to sacrifice a lot and mentally there is a big commitment; things like sleeping at set times, eating the right food. It is hard to get to that point of peak performance but once you do it then it becomes normal to stay there."

"The details? For example I used to go running and knew I'd need to do it for an hour as part of the programme but I found myself back at home after 52 minutes saying to myself 'I did my job'. Now instead of doing one hour I'll do one and five; always a little bit more. You don't need to go to the gym and bulldoze machines but you need to be strong and consistent. Before I was in the gym pulling the machines like I wanted to break them but it wasn't helping and certainly not benefitting my riding."

A turning point for Van Horebeek was joining KTM and in 2011 teaming up with Belgian icon of the sport Stefan Everts.

"In 2011 he taught me a lot. He told me how to ride and how to live. We have a small joke between us that he says I was always wearing the 'pink glasses'; doing my own thing and not wanting to listen to anybody. He said the day that I learned to take off those pink glasses then I would be a top rider. I'm learning how to do that and sometimes I still keep them on! Stefan is one of the guys that helped me get to where I am now. I also hated my physical trainer but now I kinda love him. People have been saying to me in recent weeks that I'm not a 'topper' any more but a 'world topper' and it is really nice to hear those things."

"We still have to go harder. I want to get fitter and better. Once you are 'there' you just want more and more. It is just the mentality involved and if you don't have that then you can never be a champion."

JEREMY VAN HOREBEEK



DEALING WITH BELGIAN EXPECTATION, CRITICISM AND BEING ALONE...

Since his Grand Prix debut in 2006 at the age of 17 Van Horebeek has had to handle the mantle (along with Joel Roelants and Clement Desalle) of carrying the future of Belgian motocross in his hands. As one of the most decorated nations in the sport and one that still runs MX as part of its national news coverage that's quite a responsibility. There were some bright spots in MX2 but he also conveyed a youthful 'knowitall' attitude to deal with the pressure that meant he didn't set the world alight. He changed tact with Kawasaki in 2013, and has surged to the position of one of his country's best with his unexpected team and brand switch in the winter.

"I was 'the man' in MX2 and then the 'coming kid' in MX1. As a rookie it is always difficult to deliver straight away. You also have Clement, Ken [De Dycker] and Kev [Strijbos] who are good riders. I was surprised last year when I was considering signing for Yamaha because people were saying 'that's the end; he's done'. It made me think about my decision. It was not about the money. Last year I went with my Dad to Italy to test the bike and we didn't have any contract details then but afterwards I said to my Dad 'let's do this because the bike is awesome...I can make it work'. Michele [Rinaldi] didn't know and I waited a week but my mind was made up right-away and we decided that we'd go for it and not care what people might say. The reactions like 'you are not going to make it' gave me an extra push to be how I am now; trying to be friendly to everybody but behind-the-scenes working my ass-off and making sure the bike is 100% to win motos. Ask the boys, sometimes at 6 in the evening I'm still on the bike when others have gone home."

Van Horebeek is the only MXGP factory Yamaha racer. He shares an awning with Christophe Charlier but the Corsican rides the YZ250FM in MX2. It was a bold statement of intent by the manufacturer and a sign of their belief in JHV especially after two years of atrocious luck with injuries to riders.

"Being on my own is a really good thing. I wouldn't care if someone was beside me because I know how these guys work and they said to me 'make the bike how you want it'. I can say that it is one of the best teams in the paddock. KTM is a good one, for sure. I was at Kawasaki and they were good, and for sure the bike is OK – you will never hear me say otherwise - but way under the professionalism level here. The way that Yamaha treats me gives me the power and support to 'go'. It is like a new me."



Van Horebeek is an amiable and outgoing guy. But is he too nice? There were flashes of that friendliness through his strong friendship with Jeffrey Herlings in 2012 where he struggled at times to interfere in the championship battle between the Dutchman and Tommy Searle. At the Grand Prix of Brazil last month he went on record as saying that he let Tony Cairoli take the lead away from him because he was not ready to match his pace. Is this apparent soft side to his detriment or is Van Horebeek again playing a patient game and sizing up the parameters of the job ahead?

"I let Tony go because it was the best option for me. Afterwards you hear someone like Jeffrey Herlings say 'all MX1 riders are pussies they are letting Tony by' but I can tell you that if Jeffrey comes to this class then he will not be winning races like he is now [in MX2]. People can say whatever they want but what I said in Brazil about Tony doesn't mean that I don't want to beat. I will do everything to win but I'm just 24 years old and look where I am now. I am still young and if I can keep the same consistency like I'm doing then I'm pretty sure I will soon be fighting Tony for GP wins. I just need some more time. It is my way of working. I don't want to try and beat him and end up going down and taking nothing."

Van Horebeek has also learnt about the dark side of racing; that void of injury and lack of results that can make a profile wither. He felt it at the beginning of 2013 but his u-turn on form and finishes made him one of the sought-after riders for 2014.

"I was thinking top five [in his first MXGP year] would be possible but then I broke my finger. I was last with no friends any more – you know what I mean – I was just hanging on. I regrouped and came back strong up to the top five."

"I preferred to be a bit quieter about my possibilities but after last year went towards the end then I thought I could make the podium every week this season. I cannot see many riders coming up from MX2 now and being able to beat people like me or Tommy [Searle]. I know how tough it is...I see the racing now in MX2 and I think 'man, I wish I was still an MX2 rider'!"

3

**BEING PATIENT
AND OBSERVING
THE BEST OF
MXGP**



D

FEATURE





JEREMY VAN HOREBEEK

“I feel like I am there. It is just Tony [Cairolì] ahead now as the man to beat...I still don’t know how to do it yet...”

4

**PLANNING IT
OUT IN HIS
HEAD**

Motocross is such a solitary sport, and this means the study and execution of it involves a highly personal methodology. I watched Van Horebeek closing his eyes and taking a mental lap of his lines and the track with his hands and head in the pit-lane in Thailand. It was curious to see a competent Pro athlete demonstrating a valuable technique so close up.

"Over the years you just need to find solutions and the things that work best for you. I never go to the track on Friday, even if it is a new one. I just go out easy in the first practice and then the lines and layout are in my head. I love to map out a race in my mind before we actually do it; what lines I will take and where I will go. It is like running a film in my head."

"That's a personal thing; I just love to ride and race the track by myself. It is stupid but one of the biggest and most difficult things in racing is getting into your 'own world'. Finding that silence when there might be 20,000 people around you. I learned to do it quite well over the last couple of years."



5

FINDING YAMAHA

JEREMY VAN HOREBEEK



The last part of the Van Horebeek puzzle is undoubtedly the YZ450FM (the 'm' signifying factory status) and the Rinaldi team who have fashioned a motorcycle that has already seen him clasp the Italian Championship and dominate the opening round of the Belgian national series. It is a strong partnership that has gelled from the off.

"They gave me the bike that Steven [Frossard] and the others had ridden and I asked them whether they wanted me to go forwards or vertical; it was like a rocket! It was too strong so we played around with the engine character. I asked for factory Kayaba suspension and the bike was already pretty good. Then it was just about details, like sprockets and things. I changed a lot but it was not big stuff. The main thing I altered was the position of the bike; bringing the front up and the rear down. In the beginning it was strange for the guys but now they know me and have that trust.

"In 2012 KTM put faith in me to develop that new bike to make it ready to win GPs. Maybe that is now the problem for Jordi [Tixier] and the boys; they don't really know what to do. He is saying the bike is awesome but it looks like something is wrong. I think I am pretty good at knowing what to change."

Lastly Van Horebeek's boldest traits - quiet confidence and patience - come through again. He knows he is on the path and that it can be damn rocky.

"It is still early in the season but if I can keep on this line and then have a good winter then I want to go for the MXGP title next year for sure. This season I don't need it and just want to try and make the podium every weekend. I want '15 to be my year."

STEFAN EVERTS, RED BULL KTM MX2 TEAM MANAGER

Has Jeremy's form this year been a surprise to you?

In a way I am quite surprised with the speed that he has adapted to the MXGP bike but on the other hand not so much because I know he has been putting in the work. In the two years we worked together I made him suffer quite a bit and been very direct with constructive criticism. He accepted it and wanted it. I killed him many times on a practice day to the point where he couldn't even walk anymore but he came back the next day to do it again. I want my riders to improve and the only way to do that is to go very deep to the point where they can be better. I have been tough [with Jeremy] but he respected that and followed it and I think the success he is enjoying now is from that period; I can see it is still there.

In 2014 he seems to be delivering the goods...

Last year he was not in the right team. It was a team focussed on Gautier whereas now he has the full support of Yamaha and Rinaldi and he's the only rider there. That is what he needed in a way. There is still a bit of speed to gain to Tony but everyone needs to do that. I'm not sure if the others can reach the speed and level that he [Cairolì] can bring. It is a big question. If Jeremy keeps hitting the podium then of course he will end up very high in the championship.

What would be any weakness he still needs to work on?

He needs to stay injury-free. He's had to deal with some already in the past and some riders are more sensitive to injuries than others.





JOEL SMETS, SPORT MANAGER, ROCKSTAR ENERGY SUZUKI WORLD MXGP. MX OF NATIONS TEAM BELGIUM MANAGER

Has Jeremy's form this year been a surprise to you?

I didn't expect him to be world champion at the age of nineteen in MX2 so in my eyes his progress has gone as expected. It is not a surprise to see what he is doing now because he was already performing last year and was unlucky not to get a podium. You could see that the speed was there often. The step that he has taken again now is the right way. As a Belgian motocross fan I am happy because he has not reached the end of the road. I think he has matured even more over the winter and that is to do with experience and confidence together.

What are his strengths and weaknesses?

Technically he carries good corner speed. Hard tracks, slow tracks...he is pretty all-round. He is good on the sand. I don't really see a weak

point and that is why I don't think we have seen the end of his potential in terms of what he can achieve. He has been consistent and had carried that momentum from the Italian Championship [this year]. Through confidence he is not having those big ups-and-downs that he used to have in his MX2 days. If I had to find a weak point then maybe he complained a bit too much when he was riding in MX2 but he's improved in that respect as well and I can speak from experience at the Des Nations last year when he was worried about the 250. It turned out to be rather competitive. We didn't have the fastest or the slowest bike and had very good support from Kawasaki. He did the rest with his desire, motivation and ambition and at that level those are often the key factors; how big is your desire to win? And with him it is quite big.

RACING PERFOR

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MXGP QATAR WINNER



MOTOGP

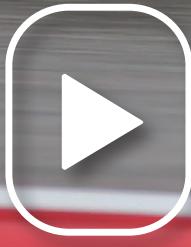
DOUBLED UP

MARQUEZ JUST KEEPS GETTING FURTHER ADRIFT AND HIS LAP-RECORD BREAKING PACE AT AUSTIN MEANT TWO OUT OF TWO AT COTA. IT COULD BE A LONG SEASON FOR THE REST OF THE FIELD...

Photos by Honda Pro Images, Ducati Corse Press, yamahamotogp.com
teamtech3.fr, KTM images/Gold and Goose

Marquez sets off in the pursuit of another American triple. The champion won all of the U.S. events in 2013 and now has six in a row based on previous efforts in Moto2





PLAY



A second consecutive runner-up position at COTA gave Pedrosa his 86th podium finish in the MotoGP class; all with Honda of course





Valentino Rossi fumed as much as his front tyre as another possible podium result when the way of the errant rubber. Perhaps Lorenzo will now start to cut out the grid 'theatre' with his second error in as many races handicapping his 2014 title push.

Great stuff from Jack Miller again in Moto3. Three more victories and he will be the most successful Aussie in Moto3/125 history. This Austin triumph also drew Australia ahead of the USA in terms of overall GP wins



A win in just his second Moto2 race for Maverick was impressive stuff and not wholly unexpected after he set the fastest lap on his debut in Qatar several weeks earlier. Tito Rabat's second podium strengthened his title credentials

MotoGP AMERICAS



After taking his first ever pole position in Moto2 at COTA in 2013 Redding had decent hopes for his MotoGP outing in Austin. The same front tyre degradation led to his crash 21 laps into the race





Bradley Smith hurries along to his best ever MotoGP finish thanks to some effective packing with his equipment. The Brit is progressing effectively in the class in just his second season. He was 12th at COTA in 2013.



PLAY



Bradl in among the black lines. The German clearly likes American soil. His fourth position was one better than in 2013



MotoGP AMERICAS



In ill Dovizioso still gives Ducati their first podium result in two years. The Italian is hugged by new boss Gigi Dall'Igna. Teammate Cal Crutchlow had crashed out and dislocated a finger



CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

MotoGP RESULT

Riders

1	Marc Marquez, SPA	Honda
2	Dani Pedrosa, SPA	Honda
3	Andrea Dovizioso, ITA	Ducati
4	Stefan Bradl, GER	Honda
5	Bradley Smith, GBR	Yamaha

MotoGP CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 2 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Marc Marquez	50
2 Dani Pedrosa	36
3 Valentino Rossi	28
4 Andrea Dovizioso	27
5 Aleix Espargaro	20

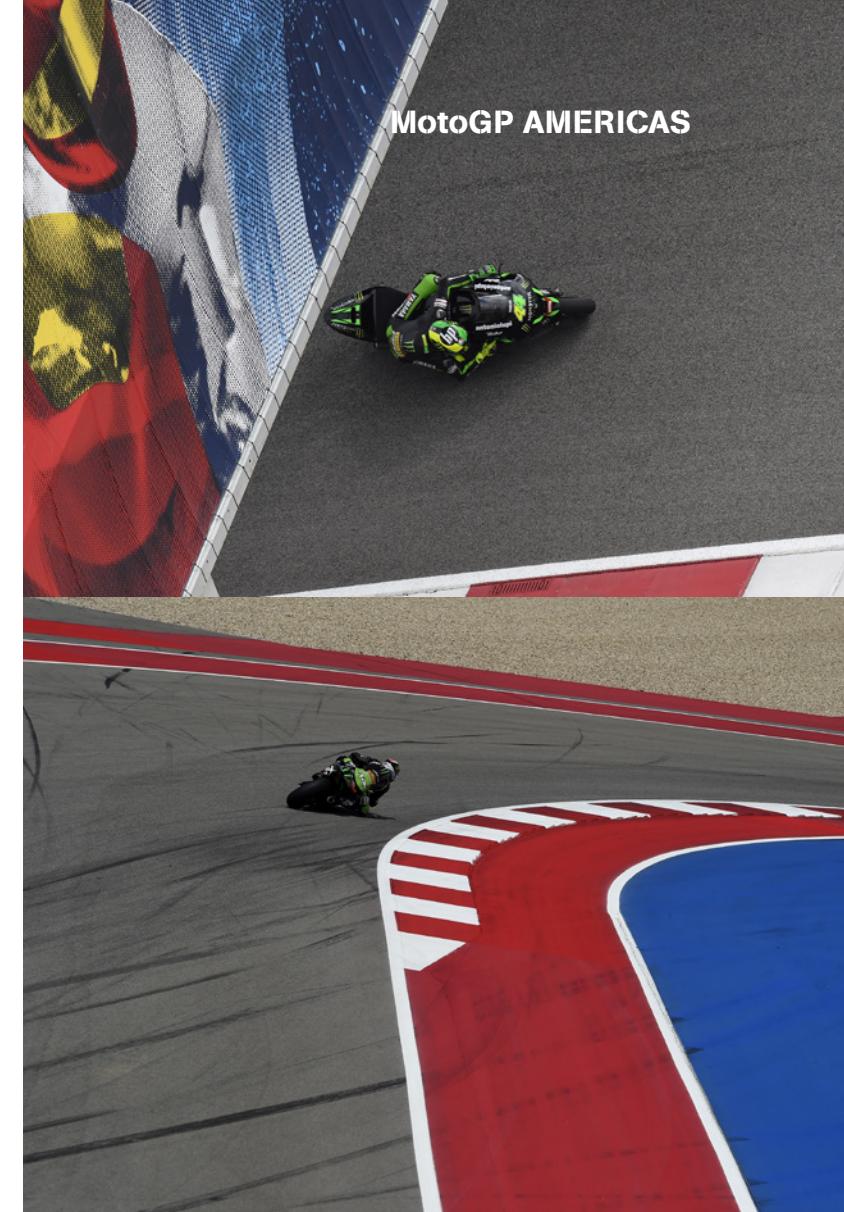
Moto2 RESULT

Riders

1	Maverick Viñales, SPA	Kalex
2	Esteve Rabat, SPA	Kalex
3	Dominique Aegerter, SUI	Suter
4	Mika Kallio, FIN	Kalex
5	Simone Corsi, ITA	Forward KX

Moto2 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 2 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Esteve Rabat	45
2 Maverick Viñales	38
3 Mika Kallio	33
4 Thomas Luthi	26
5 Simone Corsi	22



Moto3 RESULT

Riders

1	Jack Miller, AUS	KTM
2	Romano Fenati, ITA	KTM
3	Efren Vazquez, SPA	Honda
4	Alex Rins, SPA	Honda
5	Jakub Kornfeil, CZE	KTM

Moto3 CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (after 2 of 18 rounds)

Riders	Points
1 Jack Miller	50
2 Efren Vazquez	32
3 Romano Fenati	24
4 Alex Rins	24
5 Jakub Kornfeil	21



THE NEW, FREE SPIRITS...

By Matthew Roberts

‘Maverick’

noun

- 1. an unorthodox or independent-minded person.

synonyms: individualist, nonconformist, free spirit, unorthodox person, unconventional person.

Maverick, maverick, maverick... The word was bouncing around my head after young Viñales took victory in only his second Moto2 race on Sunday in Texas and it continued to do so for the next hour or so, throughout a sensational performance from the new standard bearer in MotoGP: Marc Marquez.

It is a beautiful inevitability in sport that every so often one of these geniuses comes along and raises not only the level required to perform at the top but also the way you have to prepare and perform to get there. By definition, a maverick boasts a free mind that challenges conventional wisdom, performing outside the boundaries of established best practice in their field. Mavericks live on the edge and they excite people because they are different. For basketball see Michael Jordan, for boxing see Muhammad Ali, for golf see Tiger Woods.

Motorcycle road racing is a pursuit that appeals to the maverick and you can trace a lineage of such characters as far back as you like: before Marquez came Casey Stoner, before Stoner came Valentino Rossi; before Rossi, Mick Doohan; before Doohan, Wayne Rainey; before Rainey, Freddie Spencer, Kenny Roberts... the list goes on. Outstanding during their own individual eras, it is impossible to compare the talents of these men because each took the baton from their predecessor and set new benchmarks for their contemporaries to be measured by.

Asked about Stoner’s potential during the crash-strewn early stages of his career, Doohan famously said: “You can teach a fast rider to stop crashing, but you can’t teach a slow rider to go fast.” What Mick was getting at was that whilst Stoner’s skill level and comfort zone for speed did not combine to meet established best practice at that time, he possessed an individual method for going fast that could be exploited. For that method to eventually become new best practice many factors needed to fall into place, as they eventually did for Stoner and have done in record time for Marquez.



At the precocious age of twenty-one Marc's determination to push the boundaries remains firm, which is why, after dominating every single free practice session and qualifying, he went on to break his own lap record from last year on just his second lap and continued to do so for the next eleven laps. Dani Pedrosa also broke the 2013 benchmark seven times but by the nineteenth lap he found himself trailing his team-mate by 5.6 seconds. Andrea Dovizioso, in third place at that point, was a further seventeen seconds behind. When the best in the business are establishing new limits on track MotoGP remains a thrilling spectacle even if the racing is not close. In that respect, and in this context, the Grand Prix of the Americas was a classic.

Right now there is nobody capable of halting Marquez's rise and the person most acutely aware of that is Jorge Lorenzo. After his impetuous crash in Qatar, Lorenzo blamed the 'distractions' of mosquitos on his visor and COTA's start light procedure for his bizarre jump start (he went so early he had time to stop and go again before the rest of the grid had even flinched) on Sunday, but I feel sure the real distraction is Marquez. The previously established 'best

practice' in MotoGP, the standard set by Lorenzo himself, has expired and he must search outside his own boundaries for something new.

The now-retired Ben Spies inadvertently gave an interesting perspective on the matter this week, reflecting on his own career and admitting that whilst he had the ability to win the odd race he never had it in his locker to win a championship. Ben says he didn't have the natural speed of guys like Stoner and Lorenzo but worked his butt off to match their established best practices, so that when circumstances aligned he could beat them. The challenge now for Lorenzo is to do the same with Marquez.

Eventually this fate will, of course, also befall Marquez (assuming he doesn't retire first). Like every maverick before him the next generation will identify and learn his techniques before enhancing them with their own. Until then, expect many more races like Sunday's. And enjoy them!



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AMA-SX

SEATTLE

CENTURYLINK FIELD · APRIL 12th · Rnd 15 of 1

450SX winner: Ryan Villopoto, Kawasaki

250SX West Coast winner: Cole Seely, Honda



ALMOST HOME

By Steve Matthes, photos by Simon Cudby



PLAY



Although it's been a pretty good season for the most part, with just two rounds left (and thankfully the first weekend break after 15 straight races coming up) the 2014 Monster Energy Supercross series is looking more like a funeral procession than a racing series.

It's not for lack of effort or anything like that from the riders but the sheer amount of injuries we've seen has kept the races pretty predictable lately. At least in the 450SX class. At the latest round in Seattle, there were ten riders that were in the Anaheim one main event that didn't start. The names are Reed, Tickle, Hahn, Weimer, Partridge, Goerke, Brayton, Tedesco, Albertson and Grant. That carries some weight no? It's not too unusual for the brutal sport of supercross but in 2014, with Monster Kawasaki's Ryan Villopoto having basically clinched this title for a month now, it's made the racing a little mundane.

So two rounds left and Villopoto basically has to just ride the laps in the next round in New York City (well, actually New Jersey but you know what we mean) to bring home his fourth title in a row. It's been a grind for sure but we're ready for the outdoors at this point and the possibilities that series brings.

Seattle saw a dominant ride from Villopoto from start to finish. But the day didn't start out too well for the champion when he didn't get the start he needed in the heat race and waited too long to turn on the afterburners. This left him having to go to the semi races for the third time in fifteen races and second in a row. After winning that Villopoto had the ninth gate pick for the main event and thankfully for him and his team, ripped the start that he needed. From there he rode great to pick up his fifth win of the series, which ties him with Yoshimura Suzuki's James Stewart.

Generally Seattle is a bit dicey when it comes to the weather, the Pacific Northwest being what it is this time of year, but we found as good a track as we've ever seen in Seattle. There were still some deep ruts in the turns and up the faces of the jumps and it's a lot like an outdoor motocross track...so no surprise that Villopoto was so good.

Behind him it was James Stewart who was pushing very hard. Stewart was noticeably pinning it trying to catch Villopoto and make a statement after last week's loss at Houston.

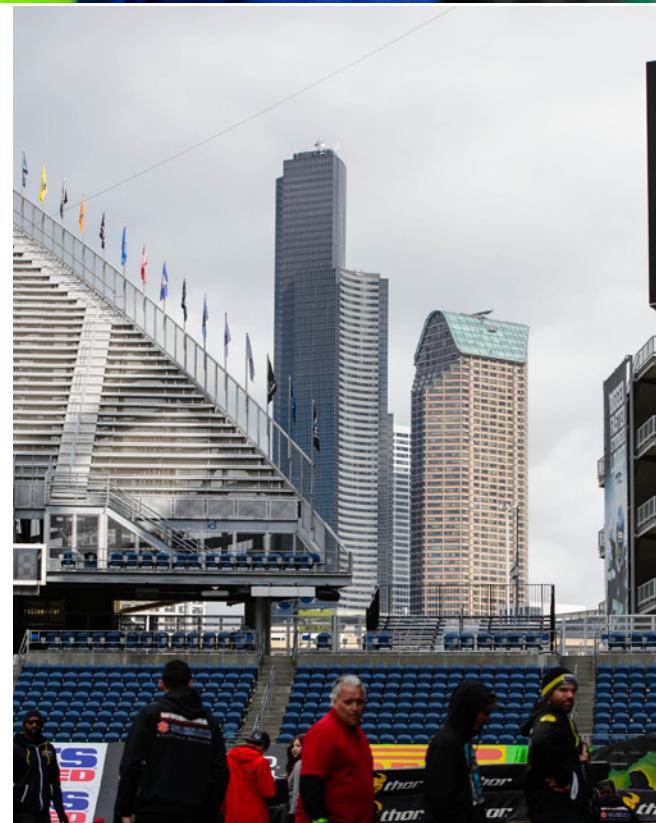
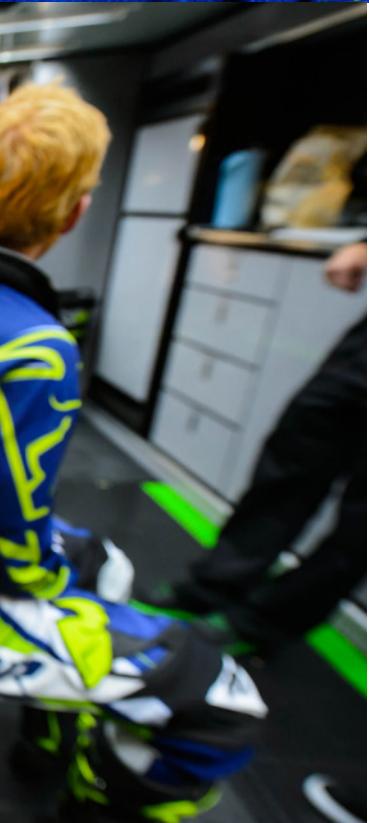




AMA-SX SEATTLE



The face says it all for James Stewart as the 43rd SX in Seattle (the tenth in the home of the Superbowl Champions) carried an air of inevitability... RV would walk away with his second win in a row, 40th in the 450SX class and the 61st of his career





PLAY



PLAY



A second, crucial win for Cole Seely and maybe one of his last on the 250. His biggest threat comes from Jason Anderson (right) as KTM go for another West Coast title

Stewart was quading a rhythm lane (only Josh Hill and Trey Canard did it- it was debatable on how much faster, if at all, it was but it still looked cool!) and at one point he made up a couple of seconds on Villopoto and things looked to be getting interesting. Then Stewart made several mistakes (one of them was casing the quad) and that was it, he backed it down a bit and brought it home in second.

The ever-consistent Red Bull KTM Ryan Dungey once again put it on the podium, his ninth of the year and first in two races. Dungey trails Stewart by three points for the runner-up position. So not everything is settled just yet! Catch the fever!

In the 250SX class Troy Lee Designs Cole Seely did what he had to do. Facing an 11-point deficit to Rockstar KTM's Jason Anderson with two races left, Seely can't do anything but win and hope that Anderson suffers some bad luck. And in Seattle Seely sprinted away from the field and was never challenged. It was a nice statement by Cole and behind him Jason Anderson was making those mistakes that he had to hope for but he still pulled out a second. A small crash, jumping off the track, a bobble in a turn and not even getting a good start; that was Anderson's night in Seattle.

Yet he showed speed and some patience to get on the box and only lose three points to Seely with now just one race left.

These two riders have been week-in and week-out the class of the field and early on in the race the only rider that could really help Seely was right in the perfect spot. Pro Circuit's Dean Wilson, he of the blinding speed and mind-numbing mistakes was in second and looking his usual strong self when he pulled a 'Wilson' and tipped over in a turn. That's 2014 in a nutshell for the talented Pro Circuit athlete as he brought it home in fourth place. Everything is working out for Anderson this year and it's hard to see him not sealing the title in a couple of weeks in Las Vegas.

So I hate to be a negative nancy but let's get this motocross series going ASAP. These races are getting more and more predictable each week with the riders seemingly also settling into a pace that gets them some finishes and keeps them upright. I can't say I blame them. Oh wait, one 'title' that is still much undecided is the Toyota trucks triple crown where the winner of a little three-race 'series inside the series' gets a new truck. Stewart's one point ahead of RV with NYC being the final round. So, yeah, there is that. Get your tickets now!







Barcia seeing blue in more ways than one it would seem. The former 250 champion missed the box for the first time in four meetings



Ken Roczen could not help KTM to a first win in Seattle and also missed the chance to take his eighth podium in a very decent rookie season

Stewart has now started 116 premier class events, more than Ricky Carmichael and Jeff Emig. With just 3 points between the Suzuki rider and Ryan Dungey there is still plenty of work to be done in New Jersey and Vegas





A fourth top ten finish for Tomac in a disrupted first 450SX season. Short meanwhile (29) has only been beaten in consistency by the rider heading the current standings

AMA-SX SEATTLE



Will the '1' come off with
champagne or some extra
power-washing Ryan?



PLAY





AMA-SX SEATTLE





AMA-SX CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

AMA 450SX RESULT

Riders

1	Ryan Villopoto, USA	Kawasaki
2	James Stewart, USA	Suzuki
3	Ryan Dungey, USA	KTM
4	Eli Tomac, USA	Honda
5	Justin Barcia, USA	Honda

AMA 250SX EAST RESULT

Riders

1	Cole Seely, USA	Honda
2	Jason Anderson, USA	KTM
3	Justin Hill, USA	Kawasaki
4	Dean Wilson, GBR	Kawasaki
5	Jessy Nelson, USA	Honda

AMA 450SX STANDINGS (AFTER 15 OF 17 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Ryan Villopoto	318
2	James Stewart	270
3	Ryan Dungey	267
4	Ken Roczen	249
5	Justin Barcia	214

AMA 250SX WEST STANDINGS (AFTER 8 OF 9 ROUNDS)

Riders		Points
1	Jason Anderson	178
2	Cole Seely	170
3	Justin Hill	139
4	Dean Wilson	138
5	Cooper Webb	121

AMA-SX SEATTLE



A return to action and a mid-top ten finish for father-to-be Zach Osborne. Where will the former GP rider be racing in 2015? For Supercross at least...



THE WHO AND THE WHERE...

By Steve Matthes

One thing that I'm constantly asked at the races, emailed about or of course in this day and age Tweeted at (@pulpmx by the way) is what's happening next year. 2015 seems to be as important as 2014 to many fans of the sport and hey, why not? With seemingly just about every rider but Ryan Villopoto, Ryan Dungey, Eli Tomac and Andrew Short contracts up, it seems that 2015 is going to be a bonanza of riders switching teams. And the fans do care and do follow this stuff closely.

So with that in mind, I've come up with a list of who's going where in the 450 class. Please keep in mind that none of this is official (unless I note it) and it's based on rumours, speculation and some sources in the pits that would know. I may not be 100% right on this list but I do think I'll be pretty close.

Honda Muscle Milk: Trey Canard is rumoured to have been re-signed for next year and beyond over there and new gossip in Seattle was a multi-year deal for Cole Seely at Honda to ride full-time in the 450 class.

Monster Energy Kawasaki: Ryan Villopoto will stick around and ride out the last year of his deal. All signs point to him probably retiring after 2015. Jake Weimer will be leaving the team and they'll be looking to sign a second rider with Dean Wilson and Davi Millsaps rumoured to be in the running.

JGR Yamaha: The North Carolina pseudo-factory Yamaha team will have Justin Barcia for the next few years. One would think Justin Brayton would be a natural to re-sign with the team but he wants a raise and the word is that the team is baulking. I still see Brayton and JGR coming to an agreement and Brayton sticking around. Josh Grant will be out and needing a ride.

Yoshimura Suzuki: James Stewart signed a new two-year deal with the team this season and it's up in the air whether he gets a team-mate or not. Word is that Malcolm Stewart could join his brother on the factory squad but I've also heard they're talking to Weston Peick. It's all about the budget over there and whether they get enough to have a second rider. I know team manager Mike Webb has said he'd like to get a second guy.



Red Bull KTM: Ryan Dungey and Marvin Musquin stay and they're looking for a second 450SX rider as Kenny Roczen is leaving. Wilson and Brayton have both been linked to this second spot but with Monster Energy loving Wilson and JGR fond of Brayton, I'm not sure I see either rider going Orange. I'm not sure if Dean Ferris, who's been injured and will be hard-pressed to make any nationals this year is coming back.

RCH Suzuki: This team will have Kenny Roczen onboard to ride Suzuki's once again under a multi-year agreement. Broc Tickle's contract is up as is Josh Hill's and it's unclear what either rider will do but one would think Tickle has a good shot to stick with the team for next year.

MCR: I can see the team sticking with Mike Alessi once again, they seem to be all-in on that program and, although I can't see it happening, Jake Weimer is rumoured to be in talks with them.

GEICO Honda: Wil Hahn's contract is up but it's easy to see the team re-signing the now injured Hahn to come back next year as he was pretty impressive in his rookie 450SX season. Eli Tomac

will be back to fulfil the second of his two-year deal on the 450.

Rockstar KTM: The word is Jason Anderson has re-signed with the team and if he wins the 250SX title he'll move to 450's and if not, he'll stay down and race the small bike once again. Davi Millsaps has missed the entire supercross season and is rumoured to be looking around for a new team but other people I speak to say he's staying there.

So that's the outlook for the 450SX class but remember kids, things could change at any moment.

SBK

ROUND 2 ARAGON

MOTORLAND ARAGON - APRIL 13th - Rnd 2 of

Race 1 winner: Tom Sykes, Kawasaki

Race 2 winner: Tom Sykes, Kawasaki

MAKING 'EM GREEN

ARAGON IS KRT-ED BY SYKES AND BAZ

Photos by Graeme Brown, Kawasaki Racing Team, Milagro, Ducati Corse Press,
suzuki-racing.com, www.worldsbk.com



PLAY



PLAY



An aerial photograph of a motorcycle racing track, likely the Aragon circuit. The track is a dark grey asphalt surface with distinct red and yellow curbs marking the edges of the turns. A single motorcycle, colored black, white, and green, is captured in mid-turn on the lower-left portion of the track. The surrounding landscape is a mix of green fields and hills, with some industrial buildings visible in the distance. A safety fence runs along the outer edge of the track, and several small structures or flags are positioned near the top of the hill.

No sign of dinosaurs near Aragon over the weekend. Sykes filled the predator role however and the champ galloped to the fifteenth and sixteenth SBK wins of his career

Aragon went from Blue-White to Green in 2014. Last year Chaz Davies had dominated on the BMW. Here the Brit continued to improve his feeling on the works Ducati..until an untimely fall in Race2. Alex Lowes gets in the zone (below) but he too would drop the Suzuki

WORLD SBK ARAGON





Melandri contributed to some great racing in the second outing on the works Aprilia. Despite some trouble with braking the former MotoGP ace picked up a third podium result of the season so far





WORLD SBK ARAGON



Some key images from KRT's green-wash of the weekend as Baz hurtles down the 1700m straight. Sykes' best lap was almost ten seconds slower than the 2013 MotoGP times (although the other series takes place in the slightly warmer climes of September)





WORLD SBK ARAGON





Sylvain Guintoli (previous page) plays the long-game at Aragon in terms of the championship picture. Jonathan Rea (right) goes steady with a 3rd and 5th while Eugene Laverty struggled with sluggish starts and the effects of engine braking with a full fuel tank



SBK CLASSIFICATION & CHAMPIONSHIP

SBK RACE ONE RESULT

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Honda
4	Chaz Davies, GBR	Ducati
5	Eugene Laverty, IRL	Suzuki

SBK RACE TWO RESULT

Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	Kawasaki
2	Loris Baz, FRA	Kawasaki
3	Marco Melandri, ITA	Honda
4	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	Ducati
5	Jonathan Rea, GBR	Suzuki

SBK CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS (2 of 14 rounds)

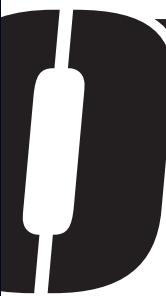
Riders

1	Tom Sykes, GBR	75
2	Loris Baz, FRA	71
3	Sylvain Guintoli, FRA	64
4	Marco Melandri, ITA	49
5	Jonathan Rea, GBR	48



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HOMOLOGATION ROOLZ OK...

By Graeme Brown

At the start of this season there was a bit of buzz around the WSBK paddock that three new marques would be competing in WSBK. Along with the new EBR team two iconic Italian brands would be back on the grid in the shape of MV Agusta and Bimota

Whilst the Buell machines and the MV, run by the Russian Yakhnich Motorsport team, were at the first race in Phillip Island, there was no sign of the fabled Bimota that would be prepared by SBK stalwarts Alstare. The simple reason was that the bikes weren't ready and that Bimota hadn't met the homologation numbers after the bike's launch at the EICMA show in November.

The FIM along with Dorna had revamped the homologation rules for WSBK to reflect current market conditions. To be eligible to compete there must be an initial production of 125 units, to increase to 250 in the first year of production and 1000 by the second year.

At the end of January Charles Hennekam, FIM Technical Coordinator and Motorcycle Homologation Officer together with Gregorio Lavilla, Dorna WSBK Sporting Director, visited the Buell factory in USA and verified that 125 units of the EBR1190RX had been built. A few weeks ago they made a similar trip to Italy but only a handful of Bimota's BB3 were built. So surely the grid is looking unlikely for Assen and round three.

In February, after several meetings of the Superbike Commission and the MSMA the FIM amended the homologation regulations for the WSBK championship. The minimum number of units remains the same but crucially a manufacturer can now compete for a period of 4 months without scoring points before they meet the total

125 units based on audited production and sales projections. A point that suits Bimota who, if rumours are to be believed, have a very 'cottage industry' approach to production, but wrangled with Buell who had pulled out all the stops to have 125 machines ready for inspection before the opening round in Australia.

Bimota now have until July to produce 125 machines. That, however, takes us to July and past the halfway point in the season.

On face value it looks fair that they will race with no points but aside from Buell's displeasure, concerns were expressed in the paddock over the weekend about how they might affect the other runners.

In the unpredictable world of racing I am sure that the Alstare pair of Badovini and Iddon will have an influence on the overall standings. For one they push other riders down the starting grid but at some point there is bound to be a 'racing incident' that will see one or more of the points scorers lose out.

It is known that several manufacturers are unhappy with the change to these regulations but some team bosses were more philosophical and could balance the negatives against the desire to have more teams and brands on the grid. At a time when motorcycles sales, and in particular sports bike sales, are in decline we should be happy to see Bimota racing and have a manufacturer bring a new bike to the market.

Time will tell how strong their influence will be on race results but I think everyone in the WSBK paddock hopes that in July there are 125 shiny new BB3's heading out to the dealers.



BELL HELMETS

With the MotoGP season well underway fans of the Bell helmets brand will be keeping an eye on the efforts of Caterham Moto2 racer (and AMA Super-bike Champ) Josh Herrin. The American will use a Star Carbon lid for his maiden Grand Prix term (as the first by a rider from the U.S in the intermediate class since 2011) and the company's premium product should be considered as a good option if any riders are in the market for some new headwear.

A quick release visor system has garnered good reviews while the shell design and weight (1.5kg) have also been highlighted as fortés of this particular model. The Velocity Flow Ventilation means that Bell have thought through ways to keep you cool in hot conditions while the rather 'mean' styling is not just for show but to help with aerodynamics. This top of the range lid (\$650) is quality stuff and comes in six different colour schemes/designs.

<http://www.bellhelmets.com/powersports/helmets/street/star-carbon>

Photos by Air Asia Caterham Racing Team







BACKPAGE

Monster Energy Girls

Simon Cudby





ON TRACK OFF ROAD



'On-track Off-road' is a free, bi-weekly publication for the screen focused on bringing the latest perspectives on events, blogs and some of the very finest photography from the three worlds of the FIM Motocross World Championship, the AMA Motocross and Supercross series' and MotoGP.

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